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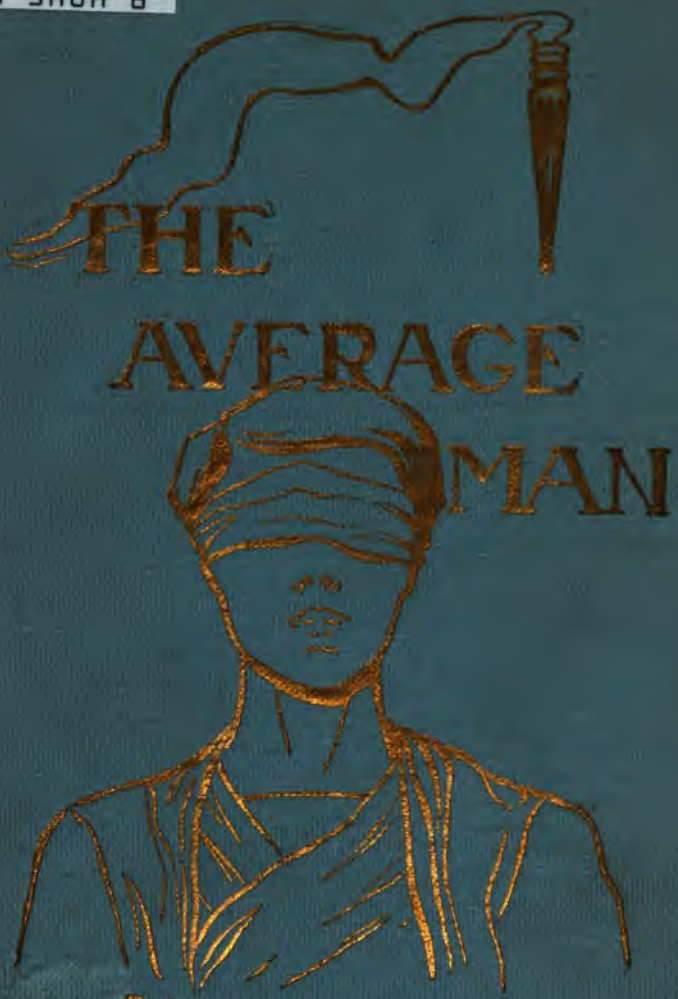

THE AVERAGE MAN

By HENRY DUMONT

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The Average Man

By

Henry Dumont

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"It is the right, it is the duty of every man who has a conception of the world to express that conception, whatever it may be. Whoever thinks he knows the truth must tell it. The honor of the human mind is at stake. The rights of the mind are superior to everything."

—Marquis Ito.

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Foreword

This little work is not presumed to be an exhaustive treatise upon any subject. It is simply intended to present a slightly different viewpoint from that of the average man upon the subject, mainly, of religion.

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The Average Man

CHAPTER I.

The average man is enslaved by Tradition. Existing forms of Religion, Politics and Industry are established in his brain and heart as fixed and final. Yet it somehow seems that in some lucid moment of his dream he perceives a hint of change, and deep in his heart feels a desire for change. Nothing is so firmly grown but that the germs of decay are in it. No institution, however honored by time, is immutable. The influence of Change is felt throughout the entire universe; the universe of mind as well as of matter.

But the average man is under the hypnotic power of Tradition. To him the world seems to move as of old. The seasons come and go; the seed is sown and the crop is harvested; the babe is born,

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and death mows down the aged and unwary. The hands of men are day by day employed at customary occupations, and night silences all but the watchman on his rounds, the revelers in their dens, the cricket and other natural and artificial noises of the dark. The same old sea laves the same old shore; the same moon shines upon accustomed scenes; the stars whirl in their courses as ever, since they sang together at the birth of the world.

So thinks the average man. He will not admit all this, it is true. He flatters himself that he lives in an advanced age. He believes that he is aware of some evidences of Change; some signs of growth. He has a hazy notion that Evolution is working its tortoise-like way along the various highways of human thought and action—but whatever he may think, this he does positively, he clings with more or less tenacity to the Politics of his father and to the Religion of his great-grandfather.

It is not meant by this that he is necessarily a Republican because his father was

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a Republican, nor that he has followed the lead of a Methodist great-grandfather along sectarian lines. He may be a Democrat, if fortune has so favored him, and he may not be found within the confines of any denomination, but his habits of thought and the roots of his beliefs are of a piece with those of his forbears. He is slow to depart from beaten paths, although the straight and narrow way offers no irresistible charms to his feet. He dare not break away from Tradition and strike out along original lines of thought. He is held by an undefined fear of evil consequences. The explanation is simple. It is due to his education; to the power of Tradition itself to bind him to its service.

The average man derives his education from his parents, his teachers and his preachers, and it is motley education indeed.

His parents, however broadminded they may be, cannot so far ignore their own mental training as to give him a free mental atmosphere in which to expand, and his education is tainted by contact

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with theories of life which have been outgrown by the advanced among men.

It does not seem to have occured to the average man that the nature of the child is a product largely of Environment, of the material condition into which the human being is born and in which he continues to exist. His nature is the product of the Environment of his parents, which, in turn, was derived from the Environment of ancestors through countless generations. It is fortunate that the father's *beliefs* are not transmitted physically to the child; being acquired through teaching and observation they are capable of alteration and improvement. When his teachers get him beneath their thumbs he is still further moulded into the image that has been designed for him—the image of the Average Man. He is taught that History is a record of the deeds of Kings, the decrees of Parliaments and the discoveries of Great Men. His memory is taxed with twisted dates of Wars, Reigns and Judicial Decisions. His mind is filled with pictures of battles, the deaths of

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heroes, and the speeches of splendid statesmen; but little of the great heart of the Multitude does he see; little does he understand the meaning of what he is permitted to know of the Past.

He considers the age of the world to be 6,000 years or thereabouts, turned adrift in the universe ready-made, just as it appears today. He believes the earth to be the center of the universe and man the center of the earth. He believes the sun, moon and stars were made to give light to the earth and that all things were made for Man, and it appears that the average man considers himself the most important human being of the lot. He has no conception of the struggle of the race from Savagery to Barbarism, and from Barbarism to Civilization. To him the discovery of the use of fire and the invention of the bow and arrow are comparatively insignificant things and mark no great human epochs. The light of Science has not yet penetrated the brain of the average man, and while he has learned that modern observation has shown that the firmament does not re-

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volve around the earth, but the earth revolves around the sun and that there are many millions of suns larger than our own, he does not quite grasp the idea that the earth is a very small particle of matter in the material universe, and man is less than an atom. He does not appreciate the fact that modern investigation has shown the earth to be many millions of years old and human life to have existed on the planet for several hundred thousand years, and he is still more or less imbued with the idea of the ancients that the earth was created in a few days complete as it appears, with men, animals and vegetation fully developed. We cannot blame the ancients for their beliefs, which were based on their limited observations, but we can blame the average man today for not keeping pace with the discoveries of the age, and permitting scientific knowledge to dispel old beliefs which had some reason for existence thousands of years ago. The human race is no longer a child in knowledge. It will have a long distance to travel before it will reach a mature condition of mind,

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but the development of the sciences is hastening its progress by freeing the mind from the domination of Superstition.

When the Teachers of the average man get through with him, his Preachers come upon him with the fetters of Religion, which bind his soul. Here is he slave indeed. To him a priest or preacher is an emissary of God, a holy man set apart from common humanity for the purpose of carrying out the designs of a creature in the skies who must work through chosen servants. To the average man the Church is an institution founded by Jehovah on the first Sabbath, when he rested from his labors to contemplate his handiwork, and called it good. To him the Bible is the word of God delivered to men in some mysterious way —out of a burning bush, or a cloud, or the mouths of babes and sucklings. To him every sentence within the covers of the books of the Church is sacred and holy, to be neither questioned nor denied. The average man crucifies Reason on the cross of Religion. When he ceases to

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think and believes without question the fables of holy men, then does he crucify his savior, Reason, and he is lost indeed. He is given up to all manner of evil influences, for Superstition becomes his absolute master. The blood of millions slain in the service of Superstition is upon the head of the average man. He is responsible for the influence of dead doctrines on a living world. His pride keeps alive the embers of a brand that seeks to expire, and but for him, would long since have been cold and dead. Superstition has caused, and today is causing misery and oppression in all avenues of life.

Superstition is the mother of Religion. No man who is free from Superstition can be religious, in the generally accepted meaning of the term—and the average man is religious. He believes in Spirits. He somehow vaguely feels that the atmosphere is peopled with unseen beings, sentient though unseen. He apprehends that, though they themselves are secure from human eyes, they can read his innermost thoughts. He will not admit that he is a spiritualist. His beliefs

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extend only to *certain* Spirits who preside over human destinies. Being a slave to Tradition, he looks upon his chief spirit as a King, and on the lesser spirits as nobles of the airy court. The streets of the invisible city of his belief are paved with gold, and voices of silver drift through strings of harps. His belief is centuries old, and time alters it but little. Here and there a line is changed, but the burden of the tale is the same. It was a dream of barbarous men on Oriental sands ages ago, and yet its story fascinates the Occidental mind in an age of science and discovery. It is an anachronism difficult of comprehension, which can only be ascribed to the power of a story.

The human mind has always been moved by the power of a story; a crystallized conception of some portion of life. It may be a fairy story. It may be a tale of battle or of love. The gathering under one cover of all the elements or events necessary to a complete story, seems to move the mind more than scattered actual happenings, or a statement of abstract truths. The Bible contains a

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series of stories, the most potent one being that which refers to Jesus Christ. From whose brain or brains it may have evolved we know not, but it remains a story which entrances the minds of millions.

Christianity is founded on a glorious fairy tale. Jesus is as much of a myth as Thor, Apollo, Aladdin or any of the famous creatures of the human imagination, and he has no more logical claim to belief than they. All have been born out of the brain of man—not as Mercury sprang from the head of Jupiter, "full-orbed" and complete, but conceived in embryo, obscurely, and matured through time to maturity. Thor, the thunder god; Apollo, the god of light, of music, of youth; Jesus the burden bearer, the savior of the world—all great subjects for stories. How the mind of the average man has been charmed by the story of this wonderful being, of his birth in a manger under the midnight sky filled with angel voices chanting "Peace on earth, Good Will to men;" of his baptism by the Holy Ghost; of his miraculous works, his strange speeches, his betrayal

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and death on the cross! His resurrection from the grave and his ascension to the skies have been believed without question by millions. He has hypnotized mankind. His creators surely realized the power of a story on the mind; yet the task of making Jesus and his religion plausible to minds that have been awakened from the story's mesmeric influence is too great for human faculties. All the marvelous efforts of the Edersheims and the Renans of many centuries have been futile.

The average man believes the statement of his preacher, which is given with more or less conviction, that the contents of the Bible is the only authorized Word of the great and only God, Jehovah; that it is his Message to mankind as a rule of life by which he must set his feet if he would entertain a hope of heaven, and failing that, his reward is to be perdition. Perdition, to some, is eternal damnation to tormenting flames; to others, everlasting darkness and loneliness; to others, a barrier to all that they desire. The average man has swallowed

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this potion for centuries without being nauseated; the poison has but served to put him into a deep sleep. It is time he should awake and free his mind from belief in a God who is both loving and cruel; a God who made him in his own image and flattered himself that the work was good, and then who created a Fiend to tempt him into evil; who placed a penalty upon the acquisition of knowledge by his creature, and who is ever ready to wreak his vengeance upon the erring. Love is human and belongs to man; cruelty is brutal and is of the beasts. There is no being higher than man who could be cruel to him. If God is cruel, vengeful and jealous, as the Bible says he is, then he is not equal to the best of men and is unworthy of respect. If the Bible is in error in this particular, it can consistently be challenged in every particular, and therefore is not the Word of God. If God had any Message for men would he entrust it to the memories of illiterate fishermen, barbarous monks and the like? God's Message to men cannot be bound between the covers of any book,

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however large, nor will it cease to be spoken as long as man is on the earth. It is a Message of Progress; a call to greater things day by day, and mankind will never climb a height so high that the Voice will not be heard calling to still further heights.

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CHAPTER II.

Evidences of evolution meet us at every turn; even the dreams of the human race are changing. The poets and prophets of all ages, to whom we give credit for exalted powers of vision, dream and prophesy only according to the prevailing philosophy of the age in which they live.

This prevailing philosophy is based upon the economic and social conditions of the time. The ancient Hebrew prophets, for example, looked forward to the coming of the Messiah, to the coming of the Kingdom of God upon earth. That was to them an ideal condition, based upon their social organization. Dante, for example, could see no further than the Hell, Purgatory and Paradise of the church of his day. Milton spent his wealth of imagination in describing the prevailing idea of a personal God and a personal Devil of his generation. Shakespeare engrossed his mind with visions of kings and queens, prelates and potentates.

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We cannot expect a human being, no matter how great his powers of vision, to see much further than his own generation. Any attempt to prophesy future events must be based upon a careful study of past and present phenomena. As the industrial and social conditions change among the peoples of the earth from age to age, their mental conceptions of the universe change accordingly. The idea of a personal God, with his angels and archangels, has its counterpart in the concrete example of the earthly King with his lords and retainers. The polytheistic idea is based upon a federation of earthly rulers, a democracy of the gods, such as existed among the Greeks.. If no god or gods had been created up to this time, and the American people were to create one, he would undoubtedly be a President of heaven with a Congress on one hand and a Supreme Court on the other; but many men have advanced beyond the point where gods are necessary, and, therefore, it is quite probable that no further gods will be created. The old gods are still

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sufficient for the average man who has not yet broken the shackles of Superstition. As the knowledge of the sciences, Astronomy, Geology, Biology and Sociology progress among the people, Superstition will vanish. It is very easy for us to see how the ancient peoples, having a very limited knowledge of things as they are, and being impressed principally with things as they seem, should permit their minds to be governed by Superstition. But the modern man in the presence of the knowledge derived from the sciences, has no reason to be religious. A man to be religious must believe that ancient writers had freer access to the fountains of knowledge than those of the present day; that progress in the knowledge of good and evil ceased with the ancients, and that the intervening time has been barren of spiritual results.

Religion springs out of the fear of loss—the loss of something irrecoverable—such as one's life, or the life of a loved one. It arises from hope of eternal life—continued possession of the changeable. It retards progress by its very desire for

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immortality. It hinders man from the discovery of the truth by discouraging all search for it, and the mind of the believer becomes crystallized in dogma and closed to all new ideas.

The average man is a stranger to Philosophy, the executioner of Superstition. He prefers the guidance of "holy" books. The word holy is always used to cast a spell about that which the eye of reason should not look upon. The "holy" Bible, the "holy" Church, the "holy" Saints, and the "holy" Relics of the sacred dead. The enlightened mind instinctively shuns the use of the word "holy," as being the chief amulet of Superstition. The word "holy" upon the covers of the Bible renders its contents suspicious, and the investigations of daring minds have proven suspicion to be well founded.

The Christian Church was established before the gospels were written, hence the gospels were written for the benefit of the Church. Without the Bible the Church would perish for lack of supporters, hence the sacred Book must be safeguarded. The minions of the Church

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throughout the world, recognizing the value of advertising, are constantly endeavoring to enlarge the circulation of the Bible, and millions of copies are distributed annually. Eminent preachers occasionally arise to defend the Bible. Does the Bible need defense? If it is the Word of God it should be inviolate. The fact that any human defense is thought necessary, is evidence of its human origin.

If there were no such thing as Evolution, and all things were created complete, once for all, then the Bible could also have been created out of the mouth of God as a complete statement of the eternal Truth; but as Evolution is the order of things, no such statement of truth is possible, and man must record his impressions as they come to him from day to day.

The Bible gives evidence of being a record of the thoughts of various men at different times. It is a history of the experiences of a race of men through many years, and, naturally, contains many conflicting statements, although having

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one general trend, which takes its character from the ideals of that race of men. As the Bible pretends to be the Word of God, and is not, it needs defenders, and these defenders will be kept busily employed through the years until the object of their defense shall have been recognized by all men for the thing it is—a human document, full of human contradictions and human errors.

The average man is told that it is necessary to love and venerate the Author of the Bible, and the Savior of whom it speaks, before he can successfully undertake to read the Book. This is rather difficult for him to understand, for he must assume, first, that the oral instructions he has received from the teachers of his childhood respecting the God of the Bible and its Savior, are true in every particular, and that this God and Savior command his love and veneration.

And second, he must believe that the Book itself is not clear in its statements, and cannot be properly understood by the ordinary investigator. There is sup-

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posed to be some peculiar essence in the Book which misses the perception of the merely literary person, and responds only to the sense which has been quickened by love. But this quickening, or awakening, may be in the nature of a distortion of the natural functions of the mind. The love of a man for a woman often adds to the man's imagination the power to idealize a creature who may be totally unattractive to the disinterested observer. A secret charm is often possessed by the works of some poet, whom one has been taught to revere by those in supposed authority, even though the works themselves remain unread.

The mind is easily led into a groove, and our present methods of education do little to prevent it. The groove has been formed and all who come near it are drawn in. Once in a while an individual escapes only by eluding the violent clutches of those already imprisoned, who are anxious to make him one of the great company. This applies with especial force to our religious ideas. These

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have been handed down with such weight of authority from time immemorial that it is only by the severest effort of the mind that we can refrain from taking them for granted.

The Church—that tremendous institution organized for the purpose of safeguarding these so-called truths—forms the greatest barrier to the independent investigation of any subject affecting the earthly welfare of mankind. The advance of Truth has always been made at the expense of the Church—at every scientific discovery the Church has been compelled to withdraw one of its outposts. There are many lines of trenches still to overcome before the citadel can be shattered. This mighty Institution which has cast its numbing shadow on the mind of man for centuries will crumble before the glaring light of Truth which some day will fall upon it.

Belief in the God of the Bible is inseparable from belief in the Church as an institution. A Church could not exist without a God, but God could exist

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without a Church, or without a Bible, or without a race of men. The God of the Bible is not the God of the Universe, the creator of all things, known and unknown, but is a circumscribed deity limited in his powers of body and mind by the experience and imagination of his biographers.

One writer has said that "to master the contents of the Bible is to fill the mind with the great thoughts of God." It is inconceivable that an intelligent man in this generation should be able to worship a God as great who would give expression to some of the contents of the Bible, or to any of it, for that matter. Imagine the Creator of the Universe saying to his own handiwork, "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever, the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken." Can any man get from this the picture of a loving, serene, magnanimous, all-comprehending God? On the con-

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trary, rather a narrow, peevish, jealous God, who could not bear to see his children partake of his luxuries.

The same churchman has stated that "the application of Biblical texts to circumstances widely different from those to which they were first applied is quite legitimate." This gives the preacher quite a deal of latitude in his elucidation, but does not in any way tend to strengthen the belief in the Bible as the Word of the unchangeable God.

If there be a God interested in the welfare of man, he could not afford to indite a message for man's guidance which would be clear only to the most learned. He would have come down to the level of understanding of the humblest intelligence, and still we are told by those who believe the Bible to be the Word of God that "there are some books, especially among the Old Testament prophets—that cannot be read through with full intelligence without some assistance from commentaries." If the "best help to the understanding of any book of

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the Bible is a knowledge of the time and circumstances in which it was composed," there are comparatively few of the world's children who will understand it.

The God of the Bible in his efforts to save the world, has wasted untold years and lost innummerable opportunities to accomplish his object. Millions have died during the past centuries who have never heard of a Bible, much less become acquainted with the circumstances in which it was written.

It has been pointed out that there is a gradual unfolding of the truth in the Bible, that the evidence of revelation shows a constant growth toward more comprehensive views of the truth. Is this not evidence that the Bible is simply a record of human experience, and that the ideas of God expressed therein are simply human ideas, subject to all the vicissitudes of a developing imagination and an enlarging experience?

In the Bible story, as in all stories, there is a hero—Jehovah, or God. He speaks to man out of a flaming bush,

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performs wonderful feats, enables man to perform feats still more wonderful. He is concerned with the everyday affairs of a small race of people, he dictates their laws, and he suspends the laws of Nature for their benefit. He is truly a wonderful being, residing in all places at once, comprehending all things, able to accomplish all things. No such hero ever existed in any other story, and it was not surprising that he should have appealed to the children of the race. In the childhood of the world the Bible was written, and men of the twentieth century are beginning to cast it aside as Fiction which has not the power to satisfy the developed mind. Growing intelligence will not admit its plausibility; the facts of Science undermine its chief tenets.

There is too much in the realm of the real awaiting the labor of men to permit further dallying with the fables of the past. The past is dead, the future will take care of itself if we take care of the present, and the present only is ours. The God of the Bible is not big enough for the present. He is not wise enough to solve

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our problems for us, he is not powerful enough to accomplish the tasks we have to face. By the labor of men is the world's work to be done, and by the labor of men will man be saved. The Bible teaches that the righteousness of man is as filthy rags; only by the grace of God can man be saved. We teach that righteousness without belief in the God of the Bible is purer and sweeter than the righteousness that comes from dependence upon the Father of Mysteries.

While the Bible tells us that God created man in his own image, we have come to know that man is the creator of all the gods that ever existed to torture him into goodness. The gods man has created have varied in strength and character with the development of the human race.

Most gods have had long lives, but none can outlast the human race. When the last man dies the last god will perish with him.

The God most likely to live the long-

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est is Jehovah, the God of the Bible, the God of the Jews and the Christians, the God of war and pestilence. He has the most perfect machinery for the extension of his kingdom and the strengthening of his dominion in the earth. He adjusts himself to varying conditions and therefore survives. His disciples are willing to apologize for his shortcomings and to atone for his mistakes. He is almost impregnably entrenched behind an inspired literature of great magnitude and power. He keeps pace with commercial progress; he paves the way with his missionaries for the extension of industrialism in all parts of the world, and therefore commands the service of capital. But he has much to answer for in his long, ambitious career.

The God of the Bible is a master, a monarch, a monster. He dominates, he enslaves. His triumphant march through the ages has been over the mutilated bodies of his own disciples. He has not spared even the children. His name is graven on the blood-stained coin of the realm; his name gives power to the

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curse. He is the incarnation of all that is worst in his creators. He is woven of the fabric of fear and wonder. He is a creature of Superstition. He is a product of the East—a malformation of the Orient—the dark, mysterious, fearful, hopeless Orient; the mother of sorceries.

His influence over the servile mind is displayed in the dedication written by the translators of his Holy Word. They address the monarch whose grace made possible the translation of the Holy Scriptures as "most dread Sovereign." This reflects the attitude of the average man toward his heavenly King. He dreads him, he fears to offend him, to turn his tender mercies into wrath and hatred. What is to be expected of men ruled by fear and Superstition? All the channels of their thoughts are poisoned; they know not the truth, nor care to know.

The Oriental mind that created the God of the Bible craved a master, a powerful lord, the weight of whose heel was as balm to the neck.

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This God of the Bible, then, is not a being we can understand. He is foreign to our modern western concepts. It is the wonder of the ages that this strange creature of the Oriental mind should have dominated for so many awful years such a large part of the Occidental world.

There exists in some minds a chamber of mystery wherein the unknowable is crowned above the known; in which Miracles receive quicker credence than Facts. But the realm of the mysterious is continually being narrowed by the advance of knowledge, by the addition of fact to fact. And with the narrowing of the realm of mystery the god of mystery is no longer able to keep his throne, and man is freed of a debasing domination. The patient labor of the scientific mind will work out man's salvation. Social Science will annul the King, and natural science will destroy the God.

The idea of the necessity for kings and rulers is fast passing. Light is spreading into all hitherto dark corners

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of knowledge, and man is becoming more independent. He is realizing that he is a creator of gods, and that he, and not God, bestows on kings the right to rule. With the passing of kings will come the passing of gods. It is too late to restore the democratic gods of Greece and Rome, and we need none. Those who have taken away the scepters of earthly rulers cannot bow with a clear conscience to a ruler in the skies.

The freethinking mind must travel all avenues of thought, and intrude even into hitherto sacred precincts of religious mystery. The cry of modern times is "Let in the light," away with darkness and its attendant evils. Knowledge has never harmed a soul; Ignorance and Superstition have damned millions. Let us look all questions squarely in the face; if they are standing on false foundations they will wither and disappear. If they are true, we shall be repaid for having made their acquaintance.

Why should the Bible be regarded as inspired above any other book? It should

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be interpreted according to the laws of human thought and speech. And what do we find? That it was written by many men at various times; in different places, in several languages, and therefore is liable to great variation, of which it gives ample internal evidence. The greatest variation is in the description of its principal characters—God and Jesus Christ. It is not one book, but many books written with different purposes in view. It is largely History, which cannot be inspired, and Prophesy, which bears no evidence of inspiration. Some of its poetry is excellent, but no more inspired than the works of Keats or Tennyson. There is no reason for limiting inspiration to the books of the holy Christian Church any more than to the works of Homer or Shakespeare. One has exactly the same claim as the other. Let us approach all with candid minds.

The translators of the Bible regarded it as the sacred Word of God, excelling all the treasures of the earth. If it were possible to comprise within the limits of a book the Word of the Creator who has

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worked silently and effectively for millions of years to produce wonders of which we have little knowledge, that book would indeed be of inestimable value. But it is not possible. If God has any Message for man it is written in the fields, and on the stones of the mountains, in the starry writings of the midnight sky, and in the heart and conscience of man. The development of man's soul is a record of the thoughts of God. There is plenty of up-to-date material fresh from the hands of the Creator which will yield far more valuable results than a perusal of a ficticious history of the ancient world. If the translators of the Bible had not been taught to believe that they were rendering into English the Word of God, they would have approached their task from a more sane and human angle.

The religious man has permitted himself to be lured into extravagant habits of thought through his belief in the divinity of the bibical writings. He has felt himself secure in the thoughts of the Most High, and has struck out with great confidence and vigor at all opposing

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forces. But the influence of Knowledge is greater than all the forces of Darkness, and cannot long be denied. The religious man is like a child in Imagination, and the appetite of Imagination transcends the power of fact to satisfy. If this religious child could be awakened into the scientific man, an incomprehensible impulse would be given to the movement of the human race toward the dawn of enlightment. The God of the Bible is one of the greatest impediments, and must be sacrificed by his followers on the altar of Truth. His followers must refuse to prostitute their minds to any creed or dogma which is not truth to them; they must dare to disbelieve. And when this monstrous God of the Bible is no more, the living God of the Universe will smile on his creation from a clearer sky.

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CHAPTER III.

The average man prays "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, a miserable sinner," when he is more sinned against than sinning. He prays "O Lord have mercy upon all those in prison and in captivity," when he himself is a prisoner or a slave. He beseeches his Lord to "be merciful to those whom He has afflicted," when his chief affliction is his self-abasement before an imaginary Master. He prays, "O Lord, keep the nations in the paths of peace," when he himself holds the power to insure permanent peace. He implores his God to "lend grace to those in authority," who are in authority by virtue of his own grace. He *prays* for everything and *does* little for himself; because he prays to an impotent god he receives nothing.

He takes what seems to be the easiest way but which proves to be a path of thorns. He substitutes laziness for Logic in his mental processes. He fails to see the sign above the door of the Church as he enters, "Abandon Reason all ye who

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enter here." His saving faculties lie in an awful stupor, from which it is almost impossible to arouse them. And he permits, nay *commands* his children to fall under the same stupefying influence.

The sight of the average man in Church, crossing his breast, responding to the reading of dead phrases, listening with open mouth and vacant mind to a serious exhortation upon the duty of men to follow the dictates of a very contradictory Book, upon whose teachings few of them can agree, would be mirth-provoking were it not so pitiful and appalling.

He does not seem to be unfavorably impressed by the legend engrossed upon the literature of the Church: "Liberal contributions respectfully solicited." He has always been compelled to pay for everything, whether he needed it or not, or whether he received any just return for his investment. The Church has exacted a toll from humanity which can never be repaid. And all by virtue of the spell it has cast over humanity by the stories of a few great characters, put

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forth as history. Moses, Elijah, David, Daniel, Jesus, are the names that have contributed to the enslavement of man to a religion that keeps him a child in intellect.

If he could only get a glimpse of history as it has been written by the blood of men rather then the pen of the Muse, he might be able to draw saner conclusions than those which guide his life. What he needs is an awakening from self-consciousness to social-consciousness. His religion is an individualistic religion. The salvation of the Individual Soul is the thing sought for, not the salvation of Society as a whole.

Because he is stationary the world seems to him to be in the same condition. He believes that all the main facts of material life upon this planet are now as they have ever been, and ever will be. It has not occurred to him that all things are mutable, blessed with the seed of change, subject to the inexorable and beneficent laws of Evolution. To him

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the golden cloud has always drifted athwart the sky at sunset; the lark sings now as on the first morning; green and golden were the hills away; cities always cast their awful shadows on the land; churches reared ambitious spires heavenward; riches and poverty brushed each others garments in the streets; customs of marriage and forms of government have known no change, and the heavens have always concealed one great God.

He imagines that he still speaks with the voice and gesture of the first man. He does not realize that his backbone is but a shortened tail; that his hands, which are capable of fashioning intricate machinery and beautiful works of art, are but perfected forms of those derived from savage ancestors, who knew neither fire nor tool, and whose subsistence was wrung with claws from savage Nature.

Immense are the distances between the status of the present humanity and its rude beginnings; and what a struggle upward the race must have had—subsisting for thousands of years upon fruits,

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nuts and herbs, before the discovery of fire; communicating through signs before the development of articulate speech; housing themselves in caves and trees, before the discovery of the art of building; hewing their way across the earth with stone before the age of iron and steel; preserving their deeds through oral tradition before the hieroglyph and the alphabet made possible the beginnings of history!

When we read history we are permitted to see only the star performers in the great drama, nay tragedy, of human life on earth. Kings, queens, knights and nobles grace the page like birds with gorgeous plumage. We are told of their births, their deeds, and their deaths; their castles and their lands are described; their battles are pictured with vivid detail; blood stains every page; pride of country and kind is honored and magnified; lust for power and crimes unnamed are adorned with the cloaks of Patriotism and Religious Zeal. But what mention is made of the men and women who toiled to feed the Kings and Queens and deck

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them in royal raiment? What honor is given to the workers who fought the battles for the lords of the soil, and who seldom fought in a cause of their own? What pictures are given of the humble abodes of those whose labor produced all the wealth of the world, but whose hands were always empty of the fruits of it?

The poor have ever been the hewers of wood and the drawers of water, but History gives them but a casual glance. We see a Joan of Arc, misguided by delusions of a divine suggestion, conquering with the aid of hosts who appear only as a mass to be imagined. We behold a Richard the Lion Hearted at the head of a mob. Columbus appears as the central figure in a great discovery, prompted by forces not even hinted at by the historian. Pizzarro conquers Peru—a marvelous achievement for a single man. The names of Popes and Prelates occupy more space than the accumulated deeds of millions of men whose achievements made possible the very life of the race, and whose efforts have given us the civilization of which

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we boast. Court intrigues, battles, Parliaments, decrees of Kings and Queens are of comparatively little importance beside the labors of men who produce the necessities of life. Kings have been deprived of their heads, and Parliaments have been dissolved without altering in the least the relation of the laborer to his toil or to his masters. The high, the great, the picturesque, the noisy ones of the human race have been exalted in History, in Art and in Song; and they are only the ephemeral shadows on the surface of things, while the great, earnest majority below are despised and rejected of the historian of the past.

Artists, in the past, devoted their canvases to scenes of religious fancy, to angels and archangels, on rolling clouds of heaven, cherubin and seraphim, saints and saviours. All was glory on the canvas, while all was darkness in the world. With the passing of time the painters saw more glory in nature and less in heaven; more beauty in actual human life than in fanciful saints. But their labors were spent in the service of the rich and power-

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ful of the earth, and what remains of their work gives us a picture of Kings, Barons, Warriors, and Ladies of the Court. Of more recent years the humbler of mankind—the worker in the shop, the tiller of the soil, the seafarer, the builder—these have been the fascinating subjects of the best of modern artists. And the future will see continually increasing devotion of Art to the glorification of the supposedly commonplace happenings in the world—the old struggle of the race to win emancipation from bondage.

The signs of change are visible on every hand. Labor is at last being recognized as the great fundamental necessity of life; useful toil, whether of brain or hand, as the only honorable thing; and the halo is being slowly shifted from the puppets of fame to the heads of the hitherto unrecognized lowly. Labor has bent the neck to the foot of the tyrant in every land for thousands of years, and has endured all manner of robbery and oppression without effective revolt. But Time, the great alterer, has been work-

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ing a change, and through the wonderful, though slow process of natural evolution, Labor is coming gradually into the ownership and enjoyment of the *fruits of its own toil,* and is being slowly, though none the less surely, recognized as the thing worthy of all honor and all reward.

The history of the future will be written about the struggles of man with rude nature, about his gradual development from a savage to a civilized and social being through his own efforts and discoveries; of the great hidden forces which compelled him to progress and win from the earth his birthright; of his gradual delivery from the darkness of Superstition to the glory of Reason; of his sufferings, his thoughts, his achievements; of the origin and development of all human institutions, however lowly. The mask will be torn from the face of the Past, and it will appear in its true aspect, and not as some have painted it; and when that is done Labor will be lifted from ignomy and reproach and given the seat of honor among the achievements of men. And the average man is a laborer.

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In the days to come *all* men and *all* women will perform some useful work; none will secure idleness through another's labor, but each will earn leisure through his own contribution of toil to the well being of mankind.

In the just days to come there will be no poor to be robbed of the things their hands have made, and there will be no rich to bear the brand of theft.

In the peaceful days to come no voice will waken the dead ear of War, nor any hand disturb his rusting armaments; for there will be no need of battle.

In the enlightened days to come the life of a human laborer will be universally esteemed above all price, where now it is the cheapest thing in this world.

In the free days to come the meaning of Slavery will have been forgotten, for none will have rights above another.

In the blessed days to come human life will be safeguarded at the expense of property, where now it is sacrificed in its defense.

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A common knowledge will fill all the peoples of the world, and Universal Brotherhood will prevail, when the average man has broken the shackles of Superstition and come under the saving influence of Enlightenment.

THE END

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